

RIMBEY

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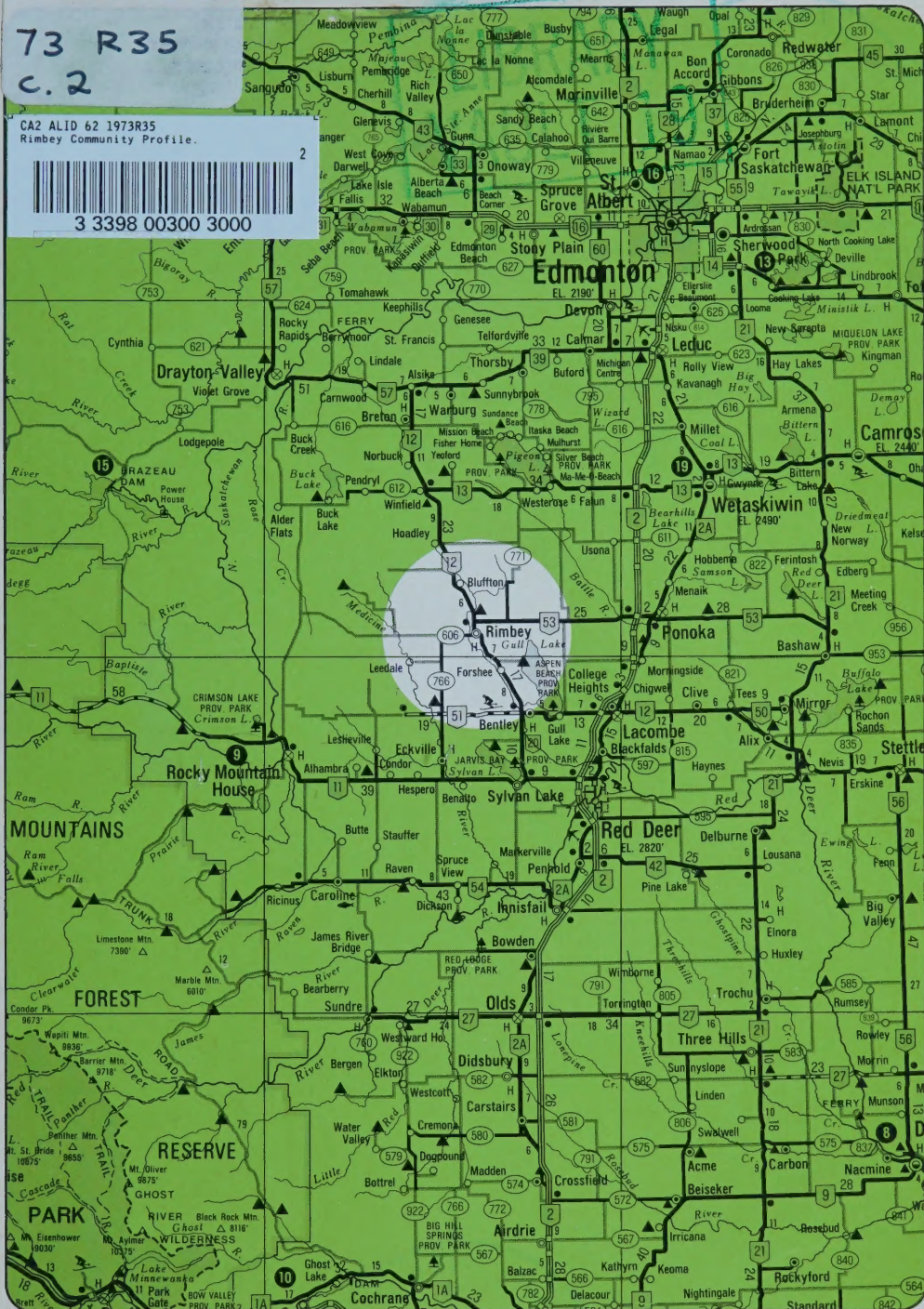
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Rimbey Community Profile.



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INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

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RIMBEY COMMUNITY PROFILE

January 1973

AN INTRODUCTION

Location

Rimbey is located in west central Alberta on high ground overlooking the Blindman River approximately 28 miles west of Ponoka and 28 miles northeast of Lacombe. The land surrounding the town is gently rolling farmland developed upon grey-wooded soils. Originally, the land to the west of the town was forested while the land to the east was under grass along the moraines with forest only in the low-lying areas.

Rimbey is a crossroads town having access to Ponoka via highway No. 53 and to Bentley and Lacombe via highways No. 12 and No. 51. These accesses are paved to provincial standards. Highway No. 12 north has been rebuilt and hard-surfaced to allow better access to Wetaskiwin, Drayton Valley and Leduc. Geographically and historically, the town is focused upon the Blindman River valley and this helps to account for the fact that most of the services coming into the town do so from Lacombe and Red Deer. The Canadian Pacific Railway serves the town and provides transportation for the petro-chemical products that are shipped from the Rimbey Gas Plant operated by Gulf Oil of Canada.

The town's altitude is 2,970 feet; latitude 53; longitude 115.

Population

Rimbey's population has grown steadily. Agriculture and lumbering were the chief sources of income until the discovery of huge natural gas deposits in the area sparked considerable growth and population influx.

1921	319
1931	304
1941	410
1951	757
1956	980
1961	1,266
1971	1,460

Weather

Average summer temperature, 58 degrees

F.

Average winter temperature, 8 degrees F.

Average annual temperature, 35 degrees

F.

Average annual rainfall, 14 inches.

Average annual snowfall, 43.7 inches.

Average annual precipitation, 18.4 inches.

Mean frost-free period, 60 days.

Mean spring frost date, June 15.

Mean fall frost date, August 20.

Start of growing season, April 25; end of growing season, October 6.

Soil

Chief soil groups in the Rimbey area are black, dark grey, dark grey wooded, and grey wooded. This soil in general lends itself well to production of coarse grains and forage crops. The relatively high rainfall and lush growing season produces large quantities of coarse grains and forage for the rapidly expanding cattle industry.

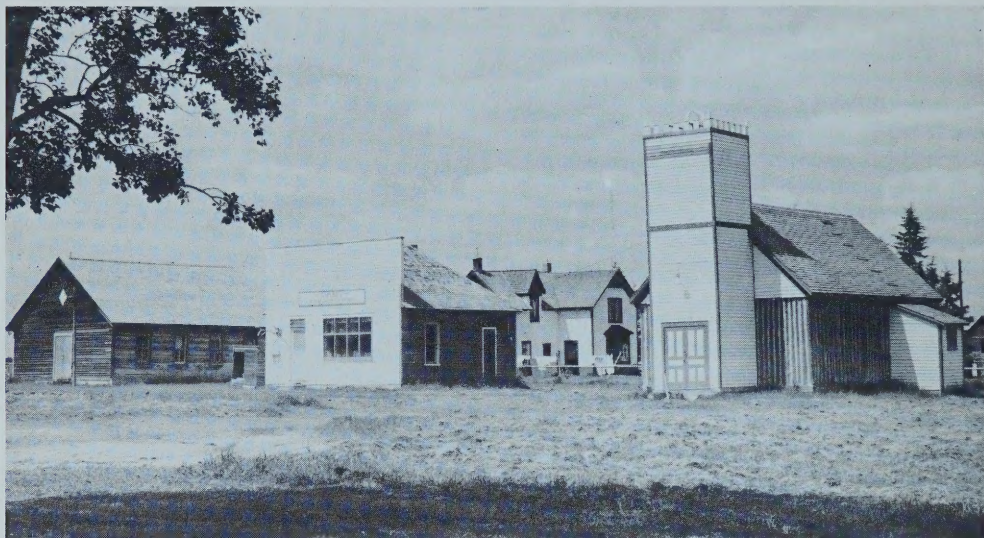
History

Little more than a century ago the Blindman Valley was still the hunting and warring ground of the Cree and Blackfoot Indians. The first European to lay eyes on the Rimbey area was Anthony Henday, on January 28, 1755. According to reliable interpretations of his journals, Henday passed near the present site of the Rimbey grain elevators on a leisurely journey northward to catch the fur brigade east when the ice went out on the North Saskatchewan River in the spring. Henday had come west the year before as fur trader and agent for the Hudson's Bay Company, with never a thought of settlement or agriculture.

Later famous travellers to pass this way included mapmaker David Thompson, artist Paul Kane, explorer James Hector, missionaries George and John McDougall, Father Albert Lacombe and many others, for one of the most travelled routes from Fort Edmonton to Rocky Mountain House led westward from the north end of Gull Lake.

Not until the turn of the twentieth century was the area hit by the wave of settlement that had been spreading westward for a decade or more since construction of the railroad between Calgary and Edmonton. For most land seekers to the locality, jumping-off point was Lacombe, where land agents met every north-bound train. Some settlers came via Ponoka.

The town dates from 1902, when it was known as Kansas Ridge because so many of the first settlers had come from that state. The name was not acceptable to the Post Office Department and in 1904 it was changed to Rimbey, for brothers Sam and Ben and Jim, late of the town of Stark, in Kansas.



Pas-Ka-Poo Historical Park preserves town and area history.

Before the Lacombe North-Western Railroad reached Rimbey in 1919, produce and merchandise had to be hauled 30 miles to and from Lacombe with horses, over very primitive roads. When the railroad did arrive, it missed the town by a mile and a new townsite was laid out adjacent to the station. For a time rivalry was sharp between the "new town" and the "old town" but the "old town" won the battle and continued to grow while the "new town" never really got off the ground.

The first school in Rimbey was unsanctioned by the Department of Education. It was known as the Reed School for its founder and benefactor, Shelby Reed. It opened early in 1902 and served, amid controversy, only a part of the community while another log building was being erected that summer on the site of the present school grounds. This became the official Kansas Ridge School #661, with Mr. James Huston Vliet as teacher. The name of the school was changed to Rimbey in 1911. A high school with seven students was opened in 1915 with Miss Mable Fleming (Mrs. W. S. Mellis) as teacher.

Rimbey's present weekly newspaper, the award winning Rimbey Record, was founded in 1930 by J. Quinn. J. A. "Jack" Parry, president in 1972 of the Canadian Community Newspapers Association, has published the Record since 1958.

The first resident doctor in Rimbey was Dr. S. N. Byers, who practiced here from 1914, when he came from Nebraska, to 1936 when he moved to Ponoka. The first hospital was set up in a private house sometime in the 1920s. The house is still occupied by Lloyd Newsom, early and longtime Rimbey barber. The present Rimbey Auxiliary Hospital (3-Way) was built about 1932 as St. Paul's General Hospital, operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph. It was turned into a chronic convalescent hospital with the completion of the first wing of the present Municipal Hospital in 1949.

In 1907 and 1908 the first church buildings were erected in Rimbey. One, the Anglican church, was constructed on a design almost unique in this province, but used by at least two other early Alberta churches. It was built of logs placed in upright position. This historic heirloom was taken over in 1963 by the Rimbey Historical Society and was preserved as part of Pas-Ka-Poo Historical Park. The other church of that era, built as a Methodist church and of frame construction, is still in limited use one block north of its original site as part of the United Church. Prior to 1908 church services were held in the school and in the Ben Rimbey home. The church of the Nazarene was organized about 1914. The first Roman Catholic parish priest was Rev. Father Murphy who served Rimbey

for many years. The chapel of St. Paul's Hospital served as the Catholic church until 1940.

Rimbey was incorporated as a village on July 11, 1919. A mill rate of 15 mills was struck on September 13, 1920. The town was electrified in 1915 by a plant owned by A. E. Drader.

The Rimbey Historical Society was formed in 1962, for the initial purpose of restoring

and preserving the above mentioned Anglican log church. In the following years, it went on to acquire and landscape a 4½ acre park in the north-west corner of the town, move and restore the 1902 log school, the old Town Office, and construct a museum building, and to collect and preserve many historical items and artifacts, and much local history. The park includes picnic facilities, a playground and a lawn bowling green.

LIVEABILITY

Rimbey is a bustling modern town equipped with all the conveniences of modern living. Most of the streets are hard-surfaced, a project completed two years ago. In addition to a well-developed older residential area, two new crescents have been developed during the past 10 years, with provision for further expansion as the occasion warrants.

There are at present 190 fully-serviced lots available for development within the town. It should be noted, however that not all of these lots are vacant. Some have buildings upon them which appear to have served their useful life and now are at a stage where they should be replaced. Serviced land is available for development to the east and west of present construction.

Battle River Regional Planning Commission has prepared subdivision designs for these areas which provide an additional 553 lots and a total of 743 lots. At the Alberta average of four persons per lot, this means that Rimbey could house an additional 2,972

persons. If this figure is added to the present population figures. Rimbey has land available for a population of 4,470, whereas the estimated population by 1981 is 4,018.

Daily bus service is provided by Brewster Gray Line to and from Edmonton through all points north of Rimbey. Cardinal Coach Lines have the franchise between Rimbey and Red Deer daily through Bentley and Lacombe.

Natural gas became available in 1960 through a franchise agreement with Northwestern Utilities Ltd. and is available to all homes, institutions and businesses within the town. Modern serviced lots are also available in a special area designed for permanent trailer homes.

There are two trailer parks in operation, one by the town, and the other, an independently owned enterprise known as Lindy's Trailer Court.

The town has six miles of asphalt streets, including the arterial highway, 3.23 miles of gravelled streets and roads.



Attractive homes line well kept Rimbey streets.

ADMINISTRATION



Community is governed from town administration building.

Civic Government

The town is governed by a mayor and six councillors elected for three year terms. The town's affairs are administered by a secretary-treasurer and an assistant in accordance with policies laid down by council, which meets regularly on the first Wednesday of each month. Public works is cared for by a crew of three men supervised by a foreman.

Tax Structure

The mill rate for the year 1971 was 71 mills, down two mills over the previous year. Property within the town is assessed every seven years by a provincial assessor. The break-down of the mill rate is:

Municipal, 32.25; Education, 38.75;
Total, 71 mills.



Main street businesses offer a variety of services.

PROTECTIVE AND UTILITY SERVICES

Law Enforcement

The town is policed by the R.C.M.P. on a patrol basis in accordance with the new Alberta Police Act which came into being on July 1, 1971. In addition, a special constable, resident in Rimbey carries on enforcement of local by-laws and certain other duties as laid down by the highway traffic act.

Building regulations are laid down by a zoning by-law which was set up in 1956 through co-operation with the Battle River Planning Commission. This zoning by-law ensures orderly development of land for business and residential use. All new building and building renovations are done via a building permit which is secured from the town.

Plumbing and gas-fitting inspections are done by the town foreman who is a qualified inspector. Electrical inspections are done by a regional electrical inspector.

Fire Protection

The fire brigade consists of a chief and 23 firemen who operate on a voluntary basis. The town maintains a new King-Seagrave pumper unit as well as a county pumper unit that is housed by the town, but provided by the county for use at fires outside of the town. This county pumper is manned by the Rimbey Fire Brigade.

Regular fire practices are held twice a month on Tuesday evening. The brigade has developed an enviable record of fire fighting efficiency. The Rimbey Brigade placed first for all of Canada for towns under 2,500 for their fire prevention program in 1970. They sponsor a fire prevention program every year.

Water and Sewer

Water is produced from four wells with a capacity of 8,250 gallons per hour. It is stored in a 175,000 gallon elevated steel storage tank. Yearly consumption of water in Rimbey is about 30,386,000 gallons.

Water Rates: Domestic - 2,500 gallons per month, \$3.50 minimum;

Next 7,500 gallons, \$7.50

Everything over 10,000 gallons is charged at 25 cents per 1,000 gallons.

There are 8.25 miles of water mains, and 9.75 miles of sewer mains.

Water Analysis

	Parts per Million
Hardness	51.5
Sulfates	73
Chlorides	9
Alkalinity	509
Nature of Alkalinity-Bicarbonate of soda, lime and magnesium	
Nitrites	nil
Nitrates	0.2
Iron	1.59
Fluorine	0.45
Soda	485.75
Soda will corrode aluminum and harm plants. Water is chemically suitable.	

Sewer Rates: Domestic, \$2. per month; schools, \$25; cafes, \$8; hospitals, \$30; coin wash, \$10; creamery, \$20.

Garbage Collection

Garbage collection is handled through a contract between the town and a garbage collector. This contract is secured through tender each year.

Electric Power

Domestic Rates: Service charge, \$2.60 per month, gross, \$2.30 net.

First 280 KWH at 1½ cents; over 300 KWH at 1¼ cents.

Commercial Rates: \$1 per KW demand.

First 40 KWH at five cents.

Next 100 KWH at three cents.

Everything over the above at 1¼ cents.

Natural Gas

Natural gas is supplied by Northwestern Utilities Ltd., through a franchise agreement.

Domestic Rates: \$3 for 20 therms, five cents per additional therm, less 8% provincial discount.

Commercial Rates: Annual minimum is 13,000 therms charges at \$15 per month and 3.8 cents per therm after 13,000 has been used, less 8% provincial discount.

HEALTH SERVICES



Rimbey General Hospital has 32-bed capacity.

An active treatment hospital with 32 beds, a chronic convalescent hospital capable of caring for 35 patients as well as a senior citizens lodge provide facilities to care for the sick and aged.

There is a medical-dental centre with three doctors and one dentist, a visiting chiropractor, one visiting optometrist, one drug store, two veterinarians as well as the Wetoka Health Unit office which is located in the town's administration building.

EDUCATION



Elementary school is one of three educational institutions.

Rimbey school system provides complete educational facilities for over 1,000 students ranging from grades one through grade twelve

The educational facilities are housed in three separate buildings, one for primary grades, one for elementary grades and the other one for the junior and senior high schools. The semester system of education has been adopted with good acceptance in the high school system.

There are 22 teachers and 407 students in the primary and elementary grades, while 31 teachers provide instruction for 547 students

in the junior and senior high schools. Vocational training is provided within the general course offered, including woodworking, photography, home economics, motor mechanics, welding, plastic art and some electronics. Musical training is provided for students at various levels of achievement in three school bands.

Physical education is organized by five physical education instructors. Organized sport in the school includes basketball, football, volleyball, badminton and curling.

ACTIVITIES AND RECREATION

Churches

United, Anglican, Lutheran, Church of the Nazarene, Roman Catholic, Church of Latter Day Saints.

Organizations

Masonic, Eastern Star, Lions, Kinsmen, Kinnettes, Canadian Legion, Chamber of Commerce, Agricultural Society, Historical Society, Light Horse Association, Western Gymkhana Club, Art Club, Fish and Game Association.

Cultural Activities

A public library is maintained and staffed through volunteer assistance in the town administration building. An arrangement with the Parkland Regional Library provides a good turnover of popular titles.

Rimbey Art Club meets once a week in the Medical Centre for instruction in oil painting and sketching. Memberships is about 25 members who, through their activities are able to sponsor an art show annually where many paintings are displayed and sold. Guest artists from other centres are encouraged to display their work as well. Because of the scenic countryside. The club goes on field trips to gain inspiration for sketching.

Youth Activities

Organized recreation such as basketball, volleyball, badminton, curling, hockey swimming, golf and fastball keep the youth of the community involved. A boy scout and cub movement provides training for boys in those age groups. The Rimbey Troop is considered to be the jewel of the Diamond Willow Scouting District of Alberta. Several 4-H clubs operate in the Rimbey district. They offer training in beef and dairy clubs as well as gardening and sewing.

Each-year the recreation department of the community organizes and carries out a playground activity program to provide summer fun for the children.

The Rimbey School has a well organized band program, which provides music instruction for over 250 children. These children have the opportunity to play in one of three school bands, depending upon their level of achievement.

Fairs and Exhibitions

Each year, early in June, it is rodeo time in Rimbey. Cowboys and chuckwagons from all over the province congregate for two days to compete for top honors in the rodeo arena.

The garden and horticultural society sponsor a home and yard competition annually, for the best-kept yard and flower arrangements. A flower show is held annually.

Recreational Facilities

Rimbey is located along the north-east ridge of the Blindman Valley, and in fact was formerly known as Kansas Ridge, named after the earliest settlers, before it received its present name. Outdoor recreation is popular in this area because the town is located in rolling parkland surrounded by many lovely lakes within easy reach.

Gull Lake provides an excellent beach on the south end known as Aspen Beach. Thousands of campers and holidayers take advantage of this family lake during the summer months. Here, acres of white sand and shallow water provide a carefree haven for families with small children. Fully-modern washrooms, bath houses, boat house and marina, and scores of picnic tables and outdoor barbecue pits situated throughout the trees add to the convenience of the camper or just the weekend holidayer. Water skiing and boating are favorite sports here. The size of Gull Lake with its even breezes makes it an ideal spot for the sailing enthusiast.

Medicine Lake is located 25 miles west of Rimbey on a good all-weather road. Camping spots have been provided for trailers and tenters, especially interesting to the people who want somewhere quiet to get away from it all and to do some hiking, fishing and resting. Perch and northern pike are found in the waters of Medicine Lake.

Medicine Lodge Ski Club operates out of facilities 14 miles south of Rimbey in the Medicine Lodge hills. Four slopes and two rope tows provide skiing for everyone from the beginner to the expert skier. Medicine Lodge Ski School offers expert ski instruction throughout the skiing season.



Challenging golf course is located a mile from town.

Excellent snowmobile trails abound west of Rimbey, through forest and meadows disturbed only by deer and other wild animals in their natural habitat. The Rimbey Fish and Game Association have succeeded in establishing the Open Creek-Medicine Lake recreation area in order to preserve this wilderness atmosphere, free from fences and other encombrances that make snowmobiling hazardous.

Open Creek Reservoir was built by the Rimbey Fish and Game Association along with assistance from many other interested local citizens and contractors, to provide a fishing spot for rainbow trout. Each year more work is done at Open Creek to improve camping facilities.

Recreation within the town of Rimbey includes curling on artificial ice, covered arena which is to have artificial ice installed in 1973, for skating, hockey and figure skating. A new outdoor swimming pool was completed in 1972. A nine hole golf course one mile south of town along the Blindman River offers quite a challenge to the duffers. Horse lovers can enjoy trail rides and gymkhanas through membership in one of the light horse clubs.

Rimbey employs a full time cultural and recreation director who organizes and co-ordinates these activities throughout the recreation district which includes the rural area surrounding the town as well as the town itself.

BUSINESSES AND SERVICES

Business Establishments

Type of Business	Number of Establishments
Accountant (calling)	1
Automobile Dealers	2
Auto Wreckers	1
Auction Market	1
Bakery	1
Banks	2
Barbers	2
Beauty Salons	2
Body Shops	1
Bottle Depot	1
Bulk Oil Agents	4
Cleaner	1
Clothing (men's)	2
Coffee Shops	2
Creamery	1
Credit Union	1
Dentist	1
Doctors	3
Drive-In Restaurants	1
Electrical Utility	1
Electricians	2
Farm Implements	3
Feed Sales	1
Food Stores	4
Furniture	1
Gas Utility	1
General Contractor	1
Grain Elevators	3
Hardware	5

Hotel	1
Insurance Agents	2
Jewellers	1
Ladies' Wear	2
Lawyer (calling)	1
Liquor Store	1
Livestock Breeding Service	1
Livestock Buying Station	1
Lumber	2
Meat Dressing Plant	1
Motel	1
Natural Gas Plant	1
Newspaper	1
Oilfield Contractors	3
Pharmacy	1
Photographic & Music Shop	1
Pipeline Companies	2
Plumbers	1
Propane Distributors	2
Radio & TV Service	1
Railway Company	1
Real Estate Agents	1
Repair Shops (automotive)	4
Service Stations	5
Shoe Repairs	1
Tires & Batteries	1
Trucking Companies	2
Variety Stores	2
Veterinarian	2
Welding & Machine Shop	2
Woodworking	1



This bank is one of three financial facilities.



Rimbey's travel accommodation includes this motel.

Financial Facilities

Bank of Montreal, Treasury Branch, Rimbey and District Credit Union.

Travel Accommodation

One hotel, 21 rooms, dining room and bar.

One motel, 10 units.

Overnight camping ground adjacent to Pas-Ka-Poo Historical Park, with washroom facilities and power hook-ups.

Provincial campsite, four miles north on highway No. 12, along the Blindman River.

Communications

Alberta Government Telephones, Post Office.

Media

Newspapers: Rimbey Record (weekly), audited circulation 1,950; Calgary Herald and Edmonton Journal (dailies) are delivered by carrier.

Television and Radio: Reception from Edmonton and Red Deer stations.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Current Economy

(The following data is taken from an economic base study of Rimbey, prepared by the Battle River Planning Commission).

There are 426 people employed full-time and 106 part time in Rimbey, giving a total of 532 gainfully employed. This figure includes workers at the various gas and oil installations who live in the town, although these plants are in some cases several miles away. It excludes some 20 rural residents who hold part-time jobs in town, mostly at the auction market. In all 532 people, or 35% of the population are employed. This is a typical figure for a community with Rimbey's age structure.

The health and welfare sector is marginally the largest with 79.5 jobs, 16% of the town's total employment. Retailing, education and manufacturing follow closely with 14%, 13% and 13%. It appears that Rimbey's economic structure is reasonably well-balanced, and is typical of a small town in central Alberta.

More important than simple employment data are figures on the economic base of the town-jobs which exist to serve the outside world, and which therefore bring money into the community. The largest single component of the economic base is the manufacturing sector, which accounts for 18% of all basic employment. This includes a small food-processing element (a bakery, a creamery, and a

meat dressing plant) but overwhelmingly the basic jobs are in the treatment and processing of natural gas.

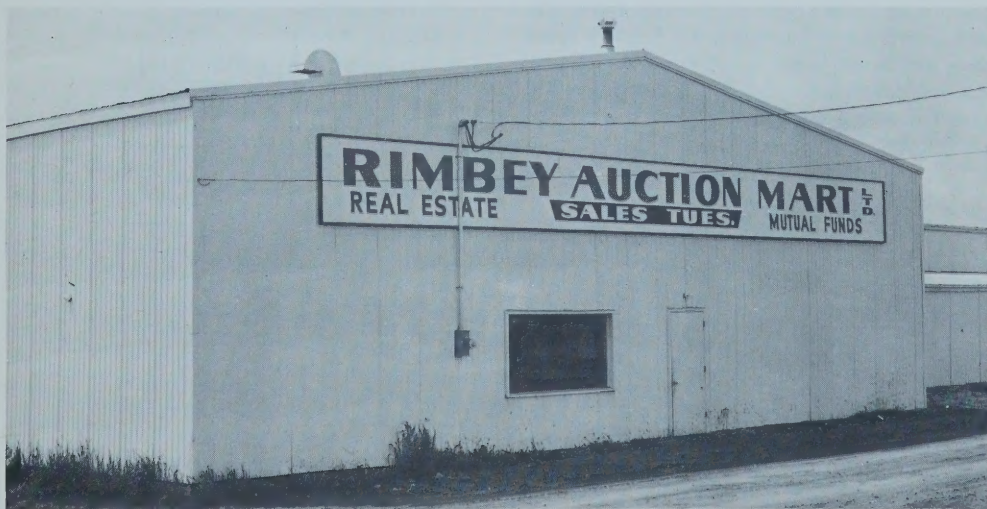
The second largest component (16%) of the town's economic base is the health and welfare sector, mostly accounted for by two hospitals. Together, these two sectors account for 34% of the town's economic base. Because these jobs are reasonably well-paid they probably account for well over one-third of Rimbey's export earnings.

Retailing and personal services contribute another 24%. In all, probably 25% of the town's cash flow from employment is generated from the oil and gas industry.

This diversity is a source of strength to the local economy. Rimbey has 11% of its population over 65 years of age, about average for the province and this is worth \$25,000 monthly. Family allowances and other transfer payments bring the total social security payments up to some \$30,000 which has the same effect on the economy as another 60-70 full-time workers.

Development Potential

While the cattle industry in the Rimbey area shows growth potential, the recreation industry stands out as having almost unlimited growth potential. Recently, plans have been announced for hunting lodges at Buck Creek and near the Bighorn Dam in country similar to that west of Rimbey. In this context



Auction market is important contributor to town and area economy.



Feed plant is vital agricultural service.

the town's "frontier" location as the last settlement before one enters the foothills becomes an asset rather than a liability.

It is ideally situated to serve a system of hunting lodges, dude ranches, youth hostels and hiking trails. With some entrepreneurial skill and competent marketing, Rimbey could diversify its economy out of the static oil and agricultural sectors and into a dynamic third element — the servicing of recreation-based hinterland.

Enquiries

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